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EDITORIAL.

WE OBSERVE with pleasure the undertaking of the Commissioner of Education to collect and publish statistics and extended information regarding the teaching of biology in the colleges and universities of the United States. We have reached a time when we may well take a survey of what has been accomplished as an incentive to the furthering of work in this line. The forthcoming report will show a very rapid extension of laboratory work in the past years, and it will bring to notice some of the inequalities in the distribution of biological instruction, which it will be well for the colleges interested to correct. It will show, for example, that one of the foremost of our universities has two unusually able men teaching zoology, and practically no botanical instruction. It will show that another with a wide reputation has the same weakness. It will show that the instruction in botany in many of the colleges is yet of the high school grade, recognizing the existence of no plants but the Phanerogams. It will show that some of our oldest institutions have been the slowest to recognize the necessity of adopting the laboratory method of instruction. In many other directions we think that this report will prove both instructive and suggestive to biologists and college presidents.

STRANGE as it may seem, many of the alterations in college courses are due not so much to the conviction of the faculty that the change is a desirable one *per se*, as to the conviction that it is necessary in order to compete successfully with other institutions. Some leaders there must be in every reform, and many followers. Statistics in regard to botanical instruction at the present time will prove to even the most conservative college president or faculty that it is imperatively necessary to recognize the science of botany in the curriculum as of equal importance with chemistry and physics, if a college is to offer any choice of work to its students, or if it is to compete on equal terms with others on which it perchance looks down. Speed the day when we shall see *thorough instruction* in the science whose interests the GAZETTE strives to promote. Speed the day when we shall see *general instruction* in the science whose interests the GAZETTE strives to promote. Speed the day when we shall see *opportunity for research* in the hands of the teachers and richer *endowment of research* in the science whose interests the GAZETTE strives to promote.

CURRENT LITERATURE.

Australian plants.

BARON MUELLER has just issued the first part of his second systematic census of Australian plants, containing Phanerogams and Pteridophytes. It is a volume of nearly 250 large pages, and in addition to being